4.

A Short Critical

POEM

ON

POETS and POETRY.

With that call'd

PLAIN TRUTH

ON

Poetry, Gallantry, and Politicks.

LONDON.

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A Short Critical ESSAY, on POETS and POETRY.

'TIS ſaid *Poeta Naſcitur, non fit*,
No Birth good Poet makes of him wants Wit
So beſt Muſicians muſt be born with Ears,
But Practice makes 'em ſing, or play ſweet Airs.
Thus if they would excell, they ne'er muſt leave it
Muſician would he be, or a good Poet.
If we begin whilſt young, we'll ſtill improve
Strong Paſſions ſing, particularly Love
Our Heads muſt ring with everlaſting Chimes
Uſe Crambo much, rehearſe eternal Rhimes.
As Ringers of Church-Bells improve by Uſe
The unpractis'd Poet, ne'er can have good Muſe
Practice retire, apply, ſeek Solitude,
Without all theſe, your Verſe will ne'er be good.
Yet hold, who i'ſt we beſt of Poets name?
Who've buſy Patrons, thoſe 'tis gain the Fame.
Homer, blind Beggar, liv'd and dy'd as ſuch,
A Ballad-ſinger then, not minded much.

Horace

22 Sept 10 P+C b.le

Horace, and *Virgil*, had the Luck to pleaſe
By fulſome Flattery in the Courtier Phraſe
A Patron who, ſoon ſet them at their Eaſe.
Without which we their Works might ne'er have ſeen
Or to have known ſuch Poets e'er had been.
Milton's Blank Verſe, were not eſteem'd or known
Till prais'd by *Halifax*, and *Addiſon*.
The latter likewiſe his great Patron had
Which put in the beſt Light all that he ſaid.
So *Tickill* vaniſh'd when his Patron dy'd:
The fine Productions were no more eſpy'd.
Swift had his *Oxford*, *Prior* had the ſame
This 'twas at firſt help'd to briſk up their Fame,
Who artful *Pope* firſt courted s'not the Caſe,
Both Whigg and Torry ſought, not for a Place.
Found *Button*'s Club, and *Bullenbrook* of Uſe
All ſuch great Patrons to protect his Muſe.
Gay had his *Dover*, *Pope* found *Gay* of Uſe
Each currey'd to'ther, each read to'thers Muſe.
This is a Trade as much as making Shoes,
Then be adyis'd, a practis'd Workman chooſe.

Where

Where good Senſe is, bad Rhime may there be found
Yet don't deſpiſe that Senſe forſake of Sound,
Beſt Thoughts 'ant ſtill produc'd by the beſt Poet
Tho' his good Rhime will to Advantage ſhew it
Theſe Pocket Thoughts, or ſteal from other Books
Then ſing like Nightingales, tho' real Rooks.
Great *Cicero*, 'tis ſaid, the World well know it
When he thus try'd he made a ſcurvey Poet.
You ſay a Poet, muſt great Merit have,
When Fame continues with him to his Grave.
Merit, cry you, it is ſuch Poets ſhew,
Great Men protect the meritorious Few.
This I deny, 'tis Flattery, Cunning, Chance,
Makes Patrons here the ſame as it does in *France*.
Till late, what Patrons *Milton* had I'd know
'Twas want of theſe in Life kept him ſo low,
Butler the ſame, no real Patron found,
Till he was gone, and buried under Ground.
Adieu ye Patrons, ſince ſuch is my Fate,
To ſeek you now for me it is too late.
Beſides *Matt. Prior*, writ his Friend *Archbald*,
Still fond of Rhiming, tho' almoſt grown bald.

The

The fiftieth Year being paſt, he ſhould no more
Implore the Muſes Help, but ſtrait give o'er.
Is this the Caſe? alas, I've ſinn'd I own,
When paſs'd that Age, my Rhiming thus t'have
ſhown
'Twas Vanity, ſtrait I'll let it alone.
Yet tho' *Matt.* ſaid at Fifty 'tis full Time
To reaſon well in Proſe, rather than Rhime.
In Rhime, 'tis true, Reaſon's in Fetters laid
Yet right or wrong in Rhime it may be ſaid
It matters not, ſince thus we are beſt paid.
What tho' old *Homer*, *Horace* in that Time
In their own Language knew not how to Rhime,
Dyed Beggars, as they uſed no ſoothing Chime
Thanks to great *Jove*, we live in better Time.
It ſooths both Old and Young, all Girls and Boys
It lulls, and ſtills, like Rattles, Jengles, Toys.
Duck's Patroneſs, created his Renown,
But all his Fame, again is with her flown.
Hail all ye Great Ones, bliſs thoſe ſooth you moſt
I'll ſooth the fair One whom I chuſe to Toaſt.

F I N I S.

PLAIN TRUTH:

A

POEM.

NOW, honeſt Friend, would'ſt thou,
I ſhew
Thee, all that's *right*, and *all that's true?*
I own, I judg'd it always *beſt*,
To grant my Reader *ſuch Requeſt*.

Since ſtill I think *beſt Policy*,
Is to have *Truth and Honeſty*.
Sincerely then without Offence,
What need I bring far-fetch'd Pretence,
My chief Intent's *to gain thy Pence*.
Lay down *thy Coin* ſtraight, *take this up*,
That I may go to *dine*, or *ſup*;
And cheriſh me from *Bacchus' Cup*.
Object not, theſe Verſes a'nt good,
Perhaps I may'nt have had *due Food*:
Or if I have ſufficient fed,
I may'nt have been *long at the Trade*.
I may *grow better*, in ſhort time,
By *Profit*, and the *Uſe to Rhime*.

What

What tho' my Verſe it be n't ſo good,
Is 't not enough, *Truth's underſtood?*
Muſt the *meer Sounds*, force out your
Tears?
Like Muſick, *tickle*, *clink*, your Ears,
With ſoothing and *deceitful Sounds*,
Since *Lyes*, with *Poetry abounds.*
Great TRUTH, in *rough-hewn Shape* ap-
pears,
She minds not *Dreſs*, nor has ſhe *Fears*,
Nor thinks of your *Applauſe* or Tears.

But now I know, dear Friend, thou 'lt aſk,
Who is this Author under Maſk?

I'll tell thee then, in truth 'tis true,
I'm downwright Dunſtable, *True-blue.*
Nor judge of me as yet much ſlighter,
Becauſe I own I'm a Proſe-Writer.
Proſe-Writer! ſtraight I hear you ſay,
What moves thee to *write Poetry?*
Since ſure if thou was't good *at Proſe,*
Thou'dſt thus find *Victuals, Drink and Cloathes.*
In truth, *kind Friend,* I will not ſham,
I know not well, how good I am.
But ſure it is, thou well canſt tell,
Each thinks that he ſhould *wear the Bell.*

Thus

Thus I think, I have ſome *Applauſe*,
Whether in beſt or the *worſt Cauſe*.
In *Science*, or in *Politicks*:
Or writ the *Devil* on *two Sticks*.
Yet ſtill I doubt the Subjects were,
Too thoughtful for moſt Mankind's care.
But laſt I writ, more *whimſical*,
So *better luck*, did that befall.
It is the Subject makes things ſell,
Not meerly from being written *well*.
Great Newton, one of his * *beſt Books*,
Was turn'd to waſte, for *Paſtry-cooks*;

Till

* His *Principia*, of which 300 were at firſt turn'd to waſte Paper, though afterwards ſold at a great Advance.

Till taken notice of in *France*,

* Or that he had *a better Chance*.

Proſe-writing, Sir, it makes no jingle,

Folks like to have their Ears to *tingle*.

Beſides, you want *too much* for Pence,

The Queſtion's not about the Senſe.

This is, *good Faith*, the reaſon why,

I take to *writing Poetry*.

For ſo in *ſtroling* t'other day,

In Pamphlet-Shop a Poem lay,

On a poor Subject as I thought,

It could not be by many bought.

Beſides,

* Alluding to ſomewhat of private Hiſtory, tho' ſufficiently well known.

Beſides, ſo ſhort, not forty Lines,
The Poet ſure on this *ne'er dines.*
Six-pence, ſaid I, for two *ſuch Sheets!*
Encouragement he *never meets;*
E'en tho' it be on *Politicks.*
You much miſtake it, *anſwer's made,*
You do not underſtand *the Trade.*
I've ſold, *quoth he,* ſome hundred ſcore.
In truth, I ne'er thought ſo before.
Ay, ay, *ſaid he,* but *hit the time,*
It ne'er can miſs, *if it be Rhime.*
'Tis ſtrange, quoth I, ſo little there is,
For that the Poet better Fare has.

Full

Full well, ſaid I, if that's the caſe,
I'll gain this Coin in *two hours ſpace.*
Whereas *at Proſe,* 'tis ten times more,
And then mayn't ſell perhaps *five ſcore.*
If it ben't on ſome noiſy thing,
Praiſe Pimp, abuſe a *Prieſt,* or *King.*
I ſtrait conclude it *beſt of Trades,*
E'en better than *play Ace of Spades.*
Since thus, 'tis ſure, you *ne'er can loſe,*
Tho' ſometimes you *mayn't have good Shoes.*
In any Seaſon e'er *ſo ſcarce,*
Your time: you can *pop down a Verſe.*
Thus tacking *Bits, and Scraps,* will do,
At *different times;* Proſe is not ſo.

'Tis

'Tis true you cry, the *Poet's Curſe,*
Is ſtill to carry, *a light Purſe,*
I heard 'twas ſo in *Days of yore,*
But now I think, *'tis ſo no more.*
In *Luxury,* Poets thrive beſt,
They either *praiſe,* or plague, *like Peſt.*
And now we lay our Schemes ſo well,
You know 'em too, I need not tell.
How *many Words,* and how *few Feet,*
Like *Chancery Writers,* in a Sheet.
But hold, ſay you, *Author,* I hope,
You don't yet fancy you are *Pope.*
No truly, neither was he ſo,
I mention'd ſome ſhort time ago.

The other Poets, *think the same,*
The less they give, *the more's their Fame.*
Thus will I also, *if I can,*
Put my self too, on *the same plan.*
First then, my *Folio* Sheets *are sold,*
The *Quarto's* next I'd turn to *Gold.*
So to *Octave's* soon they're brought,
In that Size readily they're bought.
And still for more convenient Use,
To *Duodecimo* them, reduce.
A new Edition and *fine Luxury,*
Adorn'd *with Prints,* will still *sell better.*
I'd add Notes, Hints, always amend,
Then *change, correct,* in *never end.*

Thus I'd *ſtrike out, renew, rehearſe,*
Whil'ſt *you find Money, I'll find Verſe.*
But hold, cry you, 'tis *ſpecial ſumm,*
You thus run on, have never done.
This *Hudibraſtick Rhime*, you ſay,
Like other Verſe *you will not pay.*
There's *no ſuch cuſtom*, no ſuch thing,
'Twas ne'er ſo pay'd by Prince, or King.
E'en *Butler's ſelf*, ne'er had *ſuch Pence*,
The Folks it ſeems then had *more Senſe.*
Good Faith I ſay, it was *great Shame*,
That his beſt Pay was from *poor Fame.*
Fetter'd in Verſe of ſhorter Feet,
Our Thoughts, ſure more confinement meet.

Yet in your Pocket if *I pierce,*
I eaſily, can *change my Verſe.*
But next you would be underſtood,
That I produce you *ſomething good.*
You find *great fault,* and ſtill you cry,
What will our *greateſt Poets ſay?*
What if my Verſe is *ſeen by Swift?*
Why ſure he'll ſay I make a ſhift.
What do I care how ſmart or gay,
Your Poets are, or what they ſay.
E'en let 'em ſay juſt what they will,
And that at rhiming *I've no Skill.*
Should *Horace, Virgil,* me aſſault,
With them in turn, I could *find fault.*

Were

Were they not *flattering, ſoothing, Tools?*
Fit to *praiſe* * *Tyrants*, and *gull Fools.*
A Monſter thus to gain the Throne,
Conſents to buteher all in Town:
Of his beſt Friends, he ſcarce ſpares one.

By

* Vide Hor. Od. 2. Lib. I.

Sive mutatâ juvenem figurâ
Ales in terris imitaris, almæ
Filius Maiæ, patiens vocari
Cæſaris Ultor:
Serus in Cælum redeas ——

Ode 5. Lib. III.

Cælo tonantem credidimus Jovem
Regnare: præſens Divus habebitur
Auguſtus, adjectis Britannis
Imperio, gravibuſque Perſis.

Vide Od. 14. Lib. IV. *ad Auguſtum.*

Quæ cura Patrum, ——

And Ode 15. *Auguſti Laudes.*

Phœbus volentem prælia me loqui.

——

By Flattery they themſelves to ſave,
Their Lives, with their ſmall Goods he gave,
Is't ſo you judge 'em wiſe or brave?
When *Horace* from his Colours run,
Who will not call him *great Poltroon.*
Their Patron thus took theſe baſe ways,
Whilſt they ſtill were to ſing his Praiſe.
(Enſlav'd his Country) next theſe Elves,
Vain *paultry things, praiſe themſelves.* *

Away

* Lib. IV. Ode 8. *ad M. Cenſorin.*
Gaudes carminibus carmina poſſumus
Donare & pretium dicere muneri.
Ode 9. *Ad Lollium.*
Ne fortè credas interitura, quæ
Longe ſonantem natus ad Aufidum.
Ode XX. Lib. II.
Non uſitata, nec tenui ferar
Pennâ biformis per liquidum Æthera
Vates :———

Away with 'em, I can ſcarce bear 'em,
And all their Friends, I do not fear 'em.
In monſtrous times, *ſuch Weeds* thrive beſt,
They *ornament a Tyrant's Neſt.*
They ſerve to *lull and blunt the Pain,*
Of *vileſt Crime*, ſtill hide ſuch Stain.
In Luxury, they thrive amain:
Of *Tyrrany bear up the Train.*
Their *Lyes and Flatt'ry*, is good Senſe,
Such times, it ne'er can give Offence,
The Tyrant grants 'em a Licence.
More Youth and Men have ſure been loſt,
By *Horace'* Book, you ſo much boaſt,

Than

Than any Author you can name,
Or Strumpet of the *vileſt Fame.*
What can be worſe, good Sir, d'ye think,
Than ſlily ſooth folks in to drink?
When drunk, the vileſt Crimes are done,
The horrideſt below the Sun.

He raiſes Paſſions of fond Love,
Debauch'd Examples gives of *Jove.*
Still more I doubt he does conſpire,
T' inflame with moſt unlawful Fire *.

But

* *Horace* his unnatural Addreſſes to Boys, are but too obſervable in ſeveral parts of his Book, as well as that of *Virgil*'s *Alexis*, &c.

But then Author, for ſure *cry you*,
They were good Poets, you'll allow.
Well and what then, ſuppoſe I do?

The beſt of things turn'd to *worſt uſe*,
It then becomes *greateſt abuſe*.

Beſides that tho' their Verſe were good,
With *beſt of Wine* *, and *beſt of Food*,
Took their own time, for all they did,
Drank *t' other glaſs*, then *eat a Kid* †.

* Lib. IV. Ode 12. *Ad Virgilium.*
Jam veris comites———
——Nardo vina merebere.
Lib. I. Od. 7. *Ad Plancum.*
Mecum ſæpe viri, nunc vino pellite curas;

† Epod. Ode 2.
Beatus ille———
Vel Hædus ereptus lupo.

Next ſhew'd, and told parts fit to ſmother,
Thus prais'd, lik'd, help'd they one another.

Some think *Quintilian*, *by the by*,
Great Friend to both, too, *caſt an Eye*.
And pray good Sir, *what did they do?*
Each *a ſmall Book* they writ 'tis true.
In *their whole lives*, they did no more,
Still mended, *lick'd*, *relick'd* it o'er.
Nor in their Writings do we find,
They taught *a Science* to Mankind.
Of Love, they told us *pretty Tales*,
And *to make verſe*, when *all Trades fail*.

Or in repeated, *hateful Lays*,
Still trumpeting the *Tyrant's praiſe* *,
Then Blunders too, *Criticks contend*;
Whilſt one ſtrikes out *t' other will mend.*
Rare *Shakeſpear* and *Hudibras* too,
Inſtruct Mens Minds beyond thoſe two.

Should they attack, I ſee *ſay you*,
You can *find fault*, 'tis very true.
And now *Author*, I'm *almoſt willing*
To lay thee down my *hoarded Shilling*.

* Not only *Horace*, who ſhews his fulſome Flattery to *Auguſtus* in ſeveral of his Odes, but even alſo *Virgil* in his *Bucolicks* and *Georgicks*, as moſt particularly in his *Æneid*. *Vide* the Deſcription there of *Æneas* his Armour, made by *Vulcan*.

Tho' free I am, to tell my mind,
To *ſomewhat more* I am inclin'd.
I'd rather read *Verſe on Amours*,
Whether mine, your Friend's, *or yours.*
O Reader, ben't ſo hard to pleaſe,
Faith now, in that I'm *much at eaſe.*
Why ſhould I talk of *Cupid*'s *Darts*,
They touch me but on *Fits and Starts.*
Now whilſt *that Boy*, comes in *to peep*,
Oft in *my Chair*, I fall *aſleep.*
What is't to you all that's now paſt?
Whom *firſt I lov'd*, or who *was laſt.*
Whether the *meek*, the *grey-ey'd* 'twas,
The *Brown* complexion'd, *modeſt Laſs.*

Or

Or *fair-hair'd bold, proud ſtately Queen,*
Triumph'd o'er me, as ſoon as ſeen.
If artful *Flora* ſtrikes me deep,
Confounds my Thoughts, prevents my ſleep;
Or ſtill again my Heart has *ſtray'd,*
To the brown *ſparkling black-ey'd Maid.*
Or the brown, comely, well-ſhap'd ſhe,
So tall, genteel, modeſt and free;
One yet more *buxom* if you will,
More *ſtately too*, more artful ſtill.
Or what as yet, if it ſhould be,
The gentle Fair, the *well-bred ſhe.*
That theſe two were of ſuch degree,
Equal or better far than me.

Nor

Nor did I proudly e'er diſdain
Thoſe uſeful Hand-maids, gave me pain,
Tho' deck'd in home-ſpun Robes and plain.

When five Years old, I'll ne'er forget
My Mamma's Mantua-maker *Kate*.
Firſt then in love I was right ſure,
E'en wanted ſomewhat for the cure.

Next at fifteen, *Bab* the Houſe-Maid,
I lik'd, nor was ſhe e'er diſmay'd;
She docile ſtill, I moſt afraid.

On riper Years, with far leſs fear
Tall wanton *Liſa*, did appear.

Grave

Grave *Mary* next, the much more coy,
All I could do ne'er did deſtroy,
Her care; but ſtill refus'd me joy.

Soon after her my Eyes were fix'd,
On awful *Jane*, who caught me next;
Theſe if you judge a goodly Store,
I could yet add as many more.
But now my Friend I'll tell thee this
Of kiſſing Maids, thought ſo great Bliſs,
They only do't when they're inclin'd,
Tho' I would kiſs when I've a mind.
E'en whilſt you ask 'em more and more,
Scarce grant requeſts 'till *Love is o'er.*

'Tis

'Tis true by gifts they're mostly gain'd,
The grand Affair's to be maintain'd.
But pray thee now, let us have done,
'Tis e'en full time that I be gone.

Nay hold, cry you, *before you go,*
I something further, *fain would know.*
Say somewhat now on *Politicks,*
For shame, said I, are *these your tricks.*
Is't your own thought, or is't *Old Nick's?*
You sure would put me *in a rage,*
Why ask you not likewise *my age?*
How rich I am? *Religion too?*
Which ne'er are ask'd, and why would you?

Would'st

Would'ſt thou then lead me in a Scrape?
Or burning Coals on my Head heap?
On Subjects fond to ſpeak my Mind?
In Proſe, I'm not quaintly trifling;
You may be of the other ſide,
Yet ſtill, you will not be delight.
To pleaſe you all, is hardly poſſible,
If t'other Side, he's a bad Poet,
You ſtraight ſneak off, as ſoon as your Part's,
Then damn the Author, he's a Raſcal.
But Friend with me, what do I care,
I'll ſpeak my mind, do you like it or not;
Or Riches, not becauſe they're good;

I ſmile at Schemes of *Government*,
Yet ſtrive in each to be *content*;
They all, 'tis ſaid, *from God are ſent.*
The whole Affair, ſome think't *a Jeſt*,
Since *every where*, they cry *'tis beſt*.
Of *juſt and right*, all make *great Pother*,
The ſtrong ſtill rules his weaker Brother.
Whilſt *Power* goes on by *Heritage*,
The weak ſhut up as in a Cage;
Of *Juſtice*, *Reaſon*, they may boaſt
The ſtrongeſt ſtill, will *rule the roaſt*.
Men Rulers chooſe, by their *great Blood*,
Or Riches, not becauſe *they're good*;

Or that they are the *wiſeſt Men*,
Since that's a thing ſcarce ever ſeen.
Let us then take it as it goes,
Leſt ſome ſhould pull us by the Noſe.
In every Place, ſome rule the reſt,
So *where you are*, ſtill that's *the beſt*.
Republick or the regal State,
Is not th'Affair now in Debate.
I live in either as 't's my Fate.
What ſort of Monarchs Men ſhould chooſe,
Nations determine, not my Muſe.
Which Prince is right, and which is wrong,
Is not the Buſineſs of my Song,
That thoſe decide, who are moſt ſtrong.

For

For they can prove it by a fight,
Such they ſtill chooſe have all the right.
What matters it then what I ſay,
Or who it is, that wins the Day.
Juſt as the Aſs who bears the Load,
Is much the ſame, home, or abroad.
Thus I'm neither ſo ſtiff, or *ſtout*,
But can ſubmit to *ſtronger Power*;
And rather too than chooſe *to ſwing* *,
Hollow (*with Boys*,) God ſave the King.

* In *Charles* the IId's Reign 'tis ſaid there were ſeveral Puritans, who rather choſe to be hang'd than ſay, *God ſave the King*.

F I N I S.